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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 52/100 and 53/120, the present report provides updated information on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women by intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The report is the third such report on follow-up presented this year on a rolling basis to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 52/100 of 12 December 1997 and 53/120 of 10 February 1999, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the General Assembly, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. The Secretary-General, in previous reports to the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the Conference, noted the understanding of the Secretariat that the reports to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly on the subject would be provided on a rolling basis. Each report would briefly summarize results of previous sessions of the other bodies and add new, up-to-date information. Three reports are therefore submitted in the course of a year to the three bodies under the broad heading of follow-up to the Beijing Conference and mainstreaming a gender perspective. An effort is made in each report to provide information that is most pertinent to the respective intergovernmental body in order to facilitate intergovernmental decision-making.

3. Thus, the reports to the Commission on the Status of Women emphasize efforts undertaken by the Secretariat in support of mainstreaming a gender perspective and other follow-up activities. The emphasis of the reports to the Economic and Social Council is on facilitating the coordination function of the Council. The reports to the General Assembly contain information from entities of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies and international financial institutions, as well as a review of activities undertaken at the national level and by non-governmental organizations and other institutions in civil society. Each report contains a section on means of implementation, including human and financial resource requirements.

4. Following this pattern, the present report provides an update of developments that have taken place since the submission to the General Assembly in 1998 of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Beijing Conference (A/53/308).

II. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective

A. Results of the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council in the areas of advancement of women, implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming

5. In its resolution 1999/16, the Council invited the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to formulate a system-wide plan for the advancement of women for 2002–2005 in two phases. A first phase consists of an assessment of activities undertaken by the United Nations system and of obstacles encountered and lessons learned from the current plan and the system-wide process of its implementation. The second phase should consist of a new plan reflecting the growing emphasis on action and delivery. The Commission decided that the assessment should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on the Status of Women in the Year 2000, and the new plan for 2002–2005 should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission in 2001.

6. The Council, at its high-level segment of 1999, considered the theme "The role of work and employment in poverty eradication: the advancement and empowerment of women". The report for the segment was prepared by the International Labour Organization (ILO), with contributions by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (E/1999/53). In considering this topic, the Council fulfilled the commitment made at the Fourth World Conference on Women to dedicate at least one of each of its three segments, before the year 2000, to the advancement and empowerment of women, and implementation of the Platform for Action (Platform for Action, paras. 313, 314, and 315). Reference is made to the consideration by the Council, in its 1997 coordination segment, of the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system and adoption of agreed conclusions 1997/2 (A/52/3), and the Council's consideration, in its 1998 operational activities segment, of the theme "Advancement of women: implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting,

in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development" (Council resolution 1998/26).

7. The ministerial communiqué adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1999 (see A/54/3, chap. III) highlights the gender dimensions of poverty and the need to combat gender inequalities in poverty eradication efforts. The communiqué outlines components of successful poverty eradication strategies, the promotion of productive employment and the achievement of gender equality, including the role of the international community. The communiqué calls on the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to support national poverty eradication efforts, with particular attention to employment creation and work and the empowerment and advancement of women. The Secretary-General is requested to submit a progress report to the Council at its substantive session of 2000.

8. In the agreed conclusions adopted at the humanitarian segment of its substantive session of 1999 (see A/54/3, chap. VI), the Economic and Social Council recognized that all humanitarian emergencies have gender-specific impacts. Concern was expressed at the continuing violence against those protected under international humanitarian law, especially women and children. The agreed conclusions stressed the need to integrate and further promote a gender perspective in the planning and implementation of activities concerning humanitarian emergencies, including post-conflict peace-building and reconciliation. They also noted the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) policy statement on the integration of a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance.

9. Having considered the advancement and empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming in three of its four segments, the Council could be encouraged to address the gender dimensions of special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance at a future humanitarian segment.

10. During its general segment, the Council took action on draft resolutions submitted to it by the Commission on the Status of Women. In particular, the Council recommended to the General Assembly for adoption the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Council also adopted a resolution on the revitalization of the International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), in which it requested the Secretary-General to draw up a new structure and working method for the Institute and to report in this regard to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (Council resolution 1999/54).

B. Follow-up by the United Nations system

11. Since the submission to the General Assembly of the previous report of the Secretary-General on the subject in 1998 (A/53/308), the United Nations system has continued efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

12. Information received by the Secretariat on efforts undertaken to implement the Beijing Platform for Action by United Nations entities since the submission of the previous report on the subject (A/53/308) is set out below. The present report does not, however, include information on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) since a separate report on its activities (A/54/__) will be before the General Assembly.

13. The *United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)* undertook training programmes aimed at women at the grass-roots level in 13 countries in four regions. The purpose was to empower poor women in urban neighbourhoods to take action on their own situation. Habitat has developed a best practices and local leadership global network and electronic database that incorporates good examples of gender mainstreaming.

14. The recently restructured *Department for Disarmament Affairs* began its efforts to incorporate a gender perspective into its substantive work. The first step in that direction consisted of raising the awareness and sensitivity of its staff by inviting the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and her staff to address a plenary meeting of the Department on the question of gender mainstreaming and how it could be applied to the work of the Department. As part of its outreach programme, the Department invited UNIFEM to nominate a focal point to the mechanism for coordinating action on small arms, established by the Secretary-General to coordinate all action on small arms within the United Nations system. Also, the Department intends to promote activities of grass-roots organizations headed by women, especially in post-conflict situations and peace education. A woman has, for the first time, been appointed to chair the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and the number of female members in the Board has increased to 25 percent, the highest level in the Board's 20-year history. The deliberate search for young women diplomats in all regions of the world to participate in the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme was encouraged in 1998 and again in 1999. There has been an increase in the

number of female candidates for the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. Many of the Fellows who graduate from the Programme continue in their foreign and/or defence ministries to the decision-making levels. The Department also intends to include in its 1999 programme of studies for the Fellows, among its customary disarmament subjects, one on gender mainstreaming and its relevance to disarmament and development.

15. The *Division for the Advancement of Women* organized an expert group meeting on national machineries for gender equality at Santiago in August 1998 to provide input to the discussion on the national machineries at the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session. Experts analysed the current situation of national machineries for gender equality, drawing from the experience of their countries. They developed action-oriented policy recommendations for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in this critical area. The Division for the Advancement of Women also organized, jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and in association with the Commonwealth Secretariat, an expert group meeting on the theme "Women and health: mainstreaming the gender perspective into the health sector" at Tunis in October 1998. It was hosted by the Tunisian Ministry for Woman and Family Affairs. It contributed to the discussion of the priority theme "Women and health" by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session. Experts developed a framework for integrating the gender perspective into national health policies, programmes and research, which provided guidance and support to countries. In October 1998, a workshop on a rights-based approach to women's empowerment, advancement and gender equality was held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome. It was organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Gender Equality. Its purpose was to review and clarify the understanding and implications of a rights-based approach to women's empowerment and advancement and gender equality, taking account of both policy and optional considerations. The workshop provided a unique opportunity to examine ways to merge protection and promotion of human rights and the realization of gender equality — two equally important objectives of the international community — at the programmatic and policy levels.

16. The Division for the Advancement of Women supported the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in holding a special commemorative event on 7 June 1999 to observe the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the General Assembly. The Division organized a round-table discussion on the impact of the Convention at the national/domestic level. A number of former and present members of the Committee, including former chairpersons, representatives of United Nations bodies and NGOs, participated. The Division also organized a subregional training workshop on how to prepare CEDAW reports, held at Cotonou, Benin, in July 1999. The objectives of the workshop were to provide guidelines to Governments on how to prepare their national reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and to encourage the submission of reports required under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

17. The Division, in collaboration with UNIFEM, is organizing under the WomenWatch project a series of on-line working groups on critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action. These working groups provide opportunities for exchange of experiences, good practices and successful strategies as well as identification of persistent obstacles in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. The first working group was on critical area D (Violence against women, i.e. <end-violence>), and the other was on critical area H (Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, i.e. <ww-NatMach>). They attracted participants from all over the world, approximately 25 per cent from developing countries, including participants from national machineries, civil society and United Nations organizations. A mid-term report of the on-line working group on national machineries for gender equality was distributed during the forty-third session of the Commission. Workshops on the remaining 10 critical areas of concern will be launched between September and November 1999.

18. In 1999, the Division for the Advancement of Women undertook an assessment of gender mainstreaming in UNDP-funded governance and poverty alleviation programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. The project, in collaboration with UNDP Africa and other divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is designed to assist Governments in mainstreaming a gender perspective in policies and programmes, identify lessons learned and best practices and develop a database that can be used as a monitoring tool for assessing gender mainstreaming. Twenty-two countries have been selected for the assessment.

19. In support of the Gender Advisory Services Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Department

of Economic and Social Affairs allocated financial resources under section 21 of the biennium budget 1998–1999 to recruit one Interregional Advisor on Gender Issues as well as to provide seed money to some of the operational activities. In addition, the Division for the Advancement of Women has ascertained funding under the 1998–1999 Secretary-General's Development Account to implement projects on follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women.

20. In 1999, the item "Gender mainstreaming" was placed on the agenda of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Angela E.V. King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, addressed the Committee and participated in its first substantive discussion of the issue. A study on mainstreaming a gender perspective in multidimensional peacekeeping operations was launched by Ms. King at a seminar held from 1 to 3 June 1999 and organized by the Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution of Uppsala University, Sweden, and the *Department of Peacekeeping Operations*/Lessons Learned Unit. The study, based on the project prepared by the Unit in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, undertakes a systematic gender analysis of the selected peacekeeping operations. Its results should lead to practical inclusion of gender perspective as one of the key indicators in all activities related to the prevention of violent conflicts, conflict negotiation and resolution.

21. The *United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)* keeps non-governmental organizations and women's groups from all regions of the world informed of the work and activities of the Organization as well as that of various NGOs in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. NGLS also provides information, advice and guidance on how women's groups and non-governmental organizations may effectively contribute to the work of the United Nations in this regard, and contributes to facilitating their participation in meetings and events of the United Nations that address follow-up to the Beijing Conference. In addition, NGLS publishes books and studies on substantive issues related to women and the challenge of achieving gender equality. In its approach to this work, NGLS endeavours to link the United Nations work on gender equality with its substantive work on economic and social development and human rights.

22. The *Population Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs reported that at its thirty-second session, the Commission on Population and Development adopted a decision that, *inter alia*, affirmed that "Population, gender and development" should be the special theme for the Commission at its thirty-third session, in the year 2000. The Commission also held open-ended meetings during its thirty-second session in its role as preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly (30 June–2 July 1999) for the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Those deliberations are relevant to several of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Population Division released the 1998 revision of the United Nations population estimates and projections, including for the first time gender and age disaggregated figures for age groups above 80 years, thus permitting improved understanding of the oldest old.

23. The *Statistics Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is preparing version four of the Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (Wistat). Version four will include data on new topics, including reproductive health and reproductive rights, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and violence against women, as well as additional indicators on education and communication, causes of death, marital status and on families. The database will be available on CD-ROM at the end of 1999, and will provide the basis for *The World's Women 2000*, which is being prepared under the direction and supervision of the Statistics Division for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". Key indicators on gender statistics are also disseminated with yearly updates on the Web site. The Division is carrying out a project on gender issues and the measurement of paid and unpaid work. The Division also provided technical assistance in genders statistics as an input to United Nations training activities and indicator identification exercises.

24. The *Department of Public Information* provided coverage and promoted the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Department widely disseminated the newly adopted optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to all United Nations information centres and services. In collaboration with the Division for the Advancement of Women, an information kit for the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was produced and widely disseminated. The Department collaborated on a global video-conference for the campaign on violence against women entitled "A world free of violence against women",

an inter-agency special event on International Women's Day 1999 spearheaded by UNIFEM. Also in conjunction with the observance of the Day, a panel discussion was organized by the Department of Public Information NGO Section, in cooperation with NGO partners, on the subject "Women's right to health and development", and virtually all United Nations information centres and services carried out various activities on women's issues in the period under review.

25. The *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* is in the process of gradually introducing a gender perspective in its activities. In the case of Afghanistan, the issue of gender has been integrated into the consolidated inter-agency appeal process. An IASC sub-working group on gender and humanitarian assistance was established in November 1998. As a result of its work, a policy statement on the integration of a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance was recently adopted. Moreover, a background paper on how to mainstream gender into humanitarian emergencies has also been produced at the inter-agency level. The IASC policy statement identifies four priority areas where gender needs to be mainstreamed: assessment and strategic planning for humanitarian crisis; the consolidated appeals process (CAP); a principled approach to emergencies; and the involvement of women in the planning, designing and monitoring of all aspects of emergency programmes.

26. The *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* has initiated a number of initiatives to promote gender mainstreaming and women's human rights. A workshop on gender integration into the United Nations human rights system was organized by the Office, the Division for the Advancement of Women and UNIFEM. The workshop brought together the special mechanisms (special rapporteurs, working groups and representatives of the Secretary-General) and chairpersons of treaty bodies. During the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the Office organized a panel discussion with the chairpersons of the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, a Vice-Chairperson of CEDAW, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the High Commissioner for Human Rights as panel moderator, as a parallel activity to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of CEDAW, and to strengthen the connection between the Convention and the Commission in reinforcing the promotion and protection of the rights of women. Since November 1998, the Office has a mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina which deals primarily with the issues of gender, discrimination, protection of minority rights and rule of law with a particular focus on social and economic rights. Part of this mandate is to encourage gender mainstreaming within the international organizations active in this region. In addition, the Office has developed a specific anti-trafficking programme whose objective is to work towards the integration of human rights into international, regional and national anti-trafficking initiatives, with emphasis on legal and policy development. The High Commissioner has examined the draft South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention Against Trafficking in Women and Girls. The Office is also working to encourage the national human rights commissions of the Asia and Pacific region to take up the issue of trafficking and intends to extend these efforts to national institutions of other regions.

27. The African Centre for Women of the *Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)* organized subregional follow-up meetings on the implementation of the African and Beijing Platforms for Action. Each meeting had a special focus. In North Africa, it was gender and law. For eastern and southern Africa, women's access to land was highlighted. At the meeting held in Central Africa, the special issue was the role of women in the peace process. The Centre has also produced publications, provided advisory services and technical assistance, and has organized meetings on such issues as gender and human rights education in Africa; promotion of women entrepreneurs through the establishment of business centres; and gender sensitization training for police. It also established the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development.

28. The *Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)* is preparing a new publication on women and men in Europe and North America, in collaboration with national statistical offices to assess progress since the Beijing Conference. The 1999 *Economic Survey of Europe* (No.1) analysed female employment and unemployment in countries with economies in transition. It also considered the extent to which the economic impact of transition could explain the generally falling birth rate in these countries, as well as the way in which women's roles have changed in the transition, the degree of support for childcare facilities, the changing systems of child benefits and the current situation with regard to maternity leave.

29. The *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)* initiated the second phase of the two-year project entitled "Institutionalizing the gender perspective in the substantive work of ECLAC and sectoral ministries". The activities of the present phase will primarily focus on cooperation for gender mainstreaming in the sectoral ministries of selected member States. ECLAC has also published a book entitled *Gender Indicators for Follow-up and Evaluation of the Regional Programme of Action for*

Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995–2001, and the Beijing Platform for Action. In addition to the revision and analysis of domestic legislation and judicial systems of the ECLAC region, a study analysing judicial systems from a gender perspective is in progress.

30. The *Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)* project entitled "Empowering women in poverty" includes a regional seminar scheduled to be held in Bangladesh in July 1999, in cooperation with Grameen Bank. ESCAP implemented the second phase of a project on the promotion of women's participation in economic development in Indochina through the organization of a subregional workshop on the theme "Promoting women in small business" at Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, from 28 to 30 October 1998. The workshop aimed at developing measures to promote women in small businesses. Other activities included the organization of a regional meeting on the theme "The impact of globalization on women" at Bangkok, from 22 to 24 June 1998. The discussions included the promotion of women's rights as human rights, a key area of ESCAP's efforts in empowering women. Also, ESCAP implemented a project on the theme "Promotion of CEDAW through women in development NGO-networks in the Pacific", emphasizing the promotion in the four Pacific islands. A two-day regional conference on trafficking in women was held at Bangkok on 3 and 4 November 1998, at which government and non-governmental representatives from 14 countries of the region adopted the Bangkok Accord and Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Women. The conference was organized by ESCAP in collaboration with the ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the National Commission on Women's Affairs of Thailand and the Asian Women's Fund.

31. The *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)* reported that its Committee on Social Development, in April 1999, adopted recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which were endorsed by ESCWA in May 1999 along with the report and recommendations of the Second Arab Meeting for Follow-up to the Beijing Conference (Beirut, 12–15 December 1998). The latter had adopted a questionnaire sent to Governments on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action as a framework for preparing national reports. In addition, it adopted a model for gender mainstreaming as an approach to gender equality in the next millennium. It also adopted a model for institutionalizing national machinery and mechanisms for monitoring advancement of women and implementation of the Platform for Action.

32. The *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)* continued to maintain the gender programme, with gender research being one of the Institute's five main research themes.

33. At its nineteenth session, the Board of Trustees of the *International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women* decided to establish a working group to prepare a position paper on the future of the Institute, for presentation at the substantive session of 1999 of the Economic and Social Council.

34. During the 1998–1999 biennium, despite severe financial and staffing constraints, INSTRAW successfully undertook several research and training programmes. Major research projects include those entitled (a) "Engendering the political agenda" and (b) "Temporary labour migration of women", in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. The first consists of three country case studies on factors that contribute to placing certain issues, such as violence, reproductive health and trafficking in women, into the political agenda in these countries. The research has been finalized and final reports will be completed in July 1999. Preliminary results were presented at an INSTRAW panel during the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. An expert group meeting will be held on 2 and 3 September 1999 at Bucharest in collaboration with the Institute for Quality of Life, to present the result of the research studies and to discuss the policy implications of the findings. A comparative analysis of the case studies will be prepared for publication in the last quarter of 1999.

35. The second research programme consists of case studies whose main focus is on the impact of women's temporary migration on the families that are left behind, particularly on the impact on gender roles and women's empowerment. The research phase has been completed and final reports have been finalized. An expert group meeting will be held on 30 and 31 August 1999 at Geneva, in cooperation with IOM, to present the result of the research studies and discuss the policy implications of the findings. A comparative analysis of the case studies will be prepared for publication in the last quarter of 1999. The Institute is currently conducting a research programme on women networking on conflict prevention in the Balkans, in cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU).

36. The Institute's training programme included collaboration with other entities on the following activities: (a) a joint work session on gender statistics (20 and 21 April 1998, Geneva); (b) a regional Latin American and Caribbean workshop on women's human rights, traffic and migration

(21–27 June 1998, Santo Domingo); (c) a training seminar on statistics and indicators on gender issues (26–28 May 1999, Ulaanbataar, Mongolia); and two training workshops on women in the world of work and United Nations instruments for women's human rights (May/June 1998, Dominican Republic). The Institute issued an occasional paper entitled "Engendering the global agenda: a success story of women and the United Nations", as well as inputs to the 1999 *World Survey on the Role of Women and Development*, and two issues of *INSTRAW News*, focusing on human rights of women and ageing; and convened an inter-agency brainstorming workshop (3 and 4 May 1999, New York) about approaches and strategies of United Nations gender entities in response to emerging trends and challenges for gender equality.

37. The *United Nations University* has engaged in research project activities focusing or incorporating gender perspectives under two broad areas, peace and governance, and environment and sustainable development. A project by UNU/the Institute for New Technologies (INTECH) on teleworking and sustainable development in Malaysia and India contributed to lending a gender dimension a key role in the National Information Technology Council and in the eighth five-year plan of Malaysia. The project is also seeking to ensure that women become equal beneficiaries from India's information technology policies. UNU/INTECH was also instrumental in providing a gender perspective to the preparatory meeting for the second Global Knowledge Conference, to be held in March 2000. Joint research of UNU and INSTRAW is under way to design a model for a women's network to increase their conflict resolution capacity. Through analysis of conflicts in the Balkans, the research also aims to provide policy recommendations for a gender perspective in United Nations conflict resolution efforts.

38. The *United Nations Population Fund Activities* has revised all its programming guidelines to ensure a rights-based approach to integrating gender into its three programme areas: reproductive health, population and development strategies and advocacy. The Fund has developed a two-pronged strategy: (a) promoting the adoption of gender equality values in all population and development activities; and (b) addressing the specific concerns of women, including adolescents, in order to promote their sexual and reproductive health and rights. UNFPA programme activities during 1998–1999 cross-cut a number of critical areas of concern contained in the Beijing Platform for Action, including responding to the needs of women and girls in especially vulnerable circumstances, such as refugees, internally displaced women and women in post-conflict situations. Currently, UNFPA is providing emergency reproductive health services to the victims of war in Kosovo. UNFPA is participating in the Inter-Agency Campaign on Violence against Women and Girls in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is also supporting the eradication of harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, in Africa and the Middle East, including activities targeted towards parents, teachers, community leaders and parliamentarians to create awareness of the negative effects of female genital mutilation and to promote alternative ceremonies and legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation. UNFPA is supporting initiatives against trafficking of women and girls in Asia, in particular southeastern Asia, through the promotion of research and data bases on trafficking and activities for prevention/education, rescue, resettlement and law enforcement. Also, UNFPA is supporting population education programmes as well as the development of population policies, census and surveys with gender appropriate methodologies and sex-disaggregated data.

39. The five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has identified the inter-linkages between the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action. A series of round tables, expert meetings and regional consultations have been organized on key issues, such as adolescent sexual and reproductive health (New York, 14–17 April 1998) and implementing reproductive rights and implementing sexual and reproductive health programmes, including women's empowerment, male involvement and human rights (22–25 June 1998). Recent publications include an advisory note on the reproductive health effects of gender-based violence, and case studies on the impact of globalization on women. In addition, a publication on UNFPA's best practices in gender, population and development programmes is currently being finalized.

40. The *United Nations Volunteers (UNV)*, in a joint initiative with UNDP and UNIFEM, has embarked on a pilot project to provide 20 United Nations Volunteers (UNV) gender in development project specialists to UNDP country offices. There are currently 15 gender in development specialists serving in country offices where there is no UNIFEM representation. Their tasks vary, but largely focus on providing support to gender assessment, analysis and policy guidance, follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, and policy and strategy for gender mainstreaming.

41. The *World Food Programme (WFP)* has conducted a review of its food aid for development and has concluded that gender is fully mainstreamed into its new policies. It is also actively involved in the United Nations Development

Group (UNDG) working group on the girls' education initiative. WFP is also active in incorporating a gender perspective into emergencies, as co-Chair of a sub-working group on gender in humanitarian assistance under the auspices of IASC.

42. The Programme Committee of the *Food and Agriculture Organization,* at its October 1998 session, urged the intensification of gender mainstreaming within the organization. As a first step, it recommended a corporate progress review on gender mainstreaming, which was undertaken by the Women and Population Division during spring 1999 in collaboration with all FAO divisions and departments, focusing on gender mainstreaming, and was presented at the FAO Council in June 1999. FAO has recently organized a series of events to highlight the role of rural women in food security and to develop and disseminate information on rural women. The 1998 World Food Day theme was "Women feed the world". The global media event highlighted the role of women in food security. Eighty per cent of the micro-projects funded by TeleFood are oriented towards rural women. In 1999, FAO marked the International Women's Day by launching a new corporate Web site which encompasses information on gender produced by FAO.

43. Through its technical cooperation programme, the *International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)* endeavours to ensure that necessary attention is given to the participation of women in the United Nations programme for sustainable development by encouraging the beneficiary contracting States to nominate more women for the fellowships programme.

44. *International Labour Organization* activities in support of the implementation of the Platform for Action at the policy level, included a statement by ILO's new Director General, Juan Somavia, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, 8 March 1999 expressing political commitment to an integrated gender policy with gender mainstreaming as "one of the yardsticks by which we measure our performance". Gender and development will be two cross-cutting issues in ILO's overall work. At the programme level, a series of discussions are taking place at the sector level to identify the most effective ways of mainstreaming gender. In 1998, a modular training package on gender, poverty and employment was developed by ILO and its International Training Centre at Turin. This material forms part of a capacity-building programme addressing the increasing needs of national constituents vis-à-vis the feminization of poverty. A comprehensive report on labour and social issues relating to export processing zones was also published, followed by an international meeting. In May 1999, an action plan on gender mainstreaming for gender equality was drafted, focusing on the institutionalization of gender-sensitive goals and procedures in all areas of ILO work.

45. Special efforts have been made by the *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)* to include a gender perspective in the strategic plans of the various parts of ITU for 1999 and in the work programme for 2000–2001, as well as the budget for that period. Since the resolution adopted at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (March 1998), the Telecommunication Development Bureau has begun to include a gender issues perspective in the programmes and activities. International Women's Day 1999 was celebrated with a panel discussion on the theme "Innovating leadership in telecommunications" involving five women from government, private sector and ITU who made presentations, particularly focused around the possibility of increasing the number of women in leadership positions in telecommunications. In 1999, ITU was represented for the first time at meetings of the ACC Inter-Agency Committee of Women and Gender Equality, as well as at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women. A comprehensive report was prepared for the ITU Council on activities of ITU since the adoption of a resolution on the inclusion of a gender perspective in the work of ITU at the plenipotentiary conference in October 1998.

46. The *World Bank* is developing and refining a strategy to ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed in all aspects of its work, at the policy level, in the lending programme and in research and training. At the policy level, gender has increasingly come to be seen as an integral part of the policy dialogue and consultation with Governments and civil society in the country assistance strategy and developing new approaches to integrating gender into the social and structural elements of the comprehensive development framework. This has involved making progress in reducing gender disparities, which is a central development goal in country assistance strategies, using gender indicators to measure progress under the strategy in country assistance strategies, and making gender part of the poverty assessment underlying the strategy. Lending operations have begun to address gender issues in "hard" sectors, such as transport and water and sanitation. A system of monitoring and evaluating performance and impact is under development to assess progress, determine gaps and improve performance on gender mainstreaming in all sectors. In its research activities, the World Bank is preparing a policy research report on gender and development that will assess the research evidence on gender in economic and

social development. The report has benefited from extensive consultations with the development community and civil society, and will be made available in time for the General Assembly special session entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", in June 2000. Substantial attention is also given to gender issues in the *World Development Report on Poverty 2000/1*, now in preparation. With regard to training, the World Bank gender Web page, (http://www.worldbank.org/gender) has been further refined and improved. The Gender Sector Board sponsors a continuing debate on gender issues through a series of seminars, *inter alia*, on gender issues in economic development, gender and law, gender and transport, and gender and violence.

47. Most of the activities/programmes of the *World Health Organization* aimed at improving the health of women were ongoing before Beijing. Only a few were initiated afterwards, such as activities/programmes on violence against women, collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, the development of electronic information networks on gender and health, integrating gender into health sector reform, and research on gender equality in the quality of health care. Hence, while all of these initiatives constitute the follow-up to Beijing, each will evolve and develop based on further research, evaluations and specific country demands. WHO is providing technical support to promote initiatives and to strengthen the capacity of its member States (a) to develop, implement and evaluate policies, programmes and projects that achieve gender equality in health; (b) to generate information on specific health conditions of women, and on the differential impact of patterns of disease and health on both men and women; and (c) to advocate for gender equity in health.

48. In September 1998, the *World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)* opened an exhibition entitled, "Women invent", which focused on women inventors from around the world, that is now a travel exhibition. WIPO has been participating actively in various United Nations inter-agency activities concerned with the system-wide advancement of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. When and as appropriate, WIPO cooperates with national organizations regarding gender-related activities that are sponsored or supported by government institutions of WIPO member States. During the past year, WIPO has provided resource persons to speak on intellectual property matters as related to the advancement of women. This included workshops dealing with intellectual property protection of indigenous women's art and designs, as well as events dealing with women in business and women in public administration.

III. Government responses to the review of progress in implementing the Platform for Action

49. A questionnaire prepared by the United Nations Secretariat in consultation with the regional commissions was sent to Member States in October 1998. The questionnaire requested information on trends in achieving gender equality and women's advancement, asking each Member State to report on major achievements in implementing the Platform for Action. Member States were invited to report on the implementation of each critical area of concern describing innovative policies and good practices, obstacles encountered and commitments to further actions and initiatives. As of 19 August 1999, the Division for the Advancement of Women had received replies from 89 Member States and one Observer. The information supplied is being analysed and summarized for the comprehensive review and appraisal, which will be submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session in the year 2000 and to the special session of the General Assembly in June 2000.

IV. Reported activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions of civil society

50. At the international, regional and national levels, non-governmental organizations continued to pursue the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. While these activities were not reported systematically to the Secretariat, some have been brought to the attention of the Division for the Advancement of Women, which are noted here as examples of the widespread follow-up to the Conference by civil society.

51. The planning for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" has been a major concern of many women's groups and NGOs. During the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, representatives of NGOs met to discuss ways and means to coordinate in producing their own reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Various non-governmental organizations are planning to

exchange views on implementation of the Platform using electronic networking, and to prepare alternate reports.

52. Methods of using information communications technologies so that women's organizations may effectively exchange and disseminate information on the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Asia and Pacific region was the focus of the recently concluded Asian Women's Electronic Network Training workshop (Seoul, 21–25 June 1999). Organized by the Asian Women's Resource Exchange in cooperation with Japan Foundation Asia Center, Mama Cash and UNIFEM, the workshop provided training for 23 participants from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Thailand in basic web development and other Internet-based communication tools. Similar initiatives to enable broad-based participation will be undertaken in other regions as part of a global "Women Action 2000" network.

53. A seminar on implementing economic and social rights of women in countries in transition was held at Warsaw in October 1998, organized by the NGO working group on women in the ECE region, in partnership with the ECE secretariat and the Warsaw Centre for the Advancement of Women. It covered such themes as impact of transition and globalization on women's economic and social rights; women's access to waged employment and to self employment in the countries in transition; and interrelationship between the right to employment and social rights.

54. The Division for the Advancement of Women has been informed that the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO) is planning to hold a two-day working session entitled "NGO working session for women 2000" to prepare for the special session. The working session, which will not be an NGO Forum, is planned for 3 and 4 June 2000 in New York. The NGO working group for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action is being set up to coordinate NGO activities during the second preparatory committee, the NGO working session and the special session. It will also disseminate and maintain a flow of information about the review process with a view to providing non-governmental organizations the widest possible access to information, using electronic media as much as possible. In this regard, CONGO has sent out a letter to non-governmental organizations which are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and which were accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women, inviting them to take part in an international planning committee, a coordinating committee, and an organizing subcommittee, to be set up to coordinate and encourage national, subregional and regional preparatory activities of non-governmental organizations, including the preparation of alternative reports, and to facilitate their activities during the above-mentioned three meetings.

55. NGOs based in Canada are mobilizing worldwide participation in a world march of women to take place in the year 2000, ending in New York in October 2000. The Women's Sports Foundation and the International Olympic Committee, with the Friends of the United Nations, are planning a seminar/event on the crosscutting issue of women and sports, to be held in 2000 in conjunction with the special session.

56. The International Women's Tribune Centre has published two issues in a series entitled "Preview 2000" that cover plans and preparations for the five-year review of the Platform for Action. Flora Tristan, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNIFEM, has published case studies, entitled "Roads to Beijing" which reflect on the Beijing process in Latin America and the Caribbean.

57. The Karat Coalition organized a Central-Eastern European Preparatory meeting for the five-year review of the Platform for Action at Bucharest on 15 and 16 May 1999. Women from 12 countries discussed preparations for the review process, which included preparing alternative national and regional reports. A follow-up meeting is planned for the autumn of 1999. The WIDE-Network women in development annual conference was held at Ede, the Netherlands, from 28 to 30 May 1999. The theme of the conference was entitled "Linking up reviews +5 — Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing: towards the twenty-first century", and was organized by Vrouwenberaad, in cooperation with Society for International Development. It provided an opportunity to share experiences and formulate strategies around the review process.

V. Means of implementation, including human and financial requirements

58. The *Department of Disarmament Affairs* has adopted a three-pronged strategy which is aimed at increasing the number of its female staff members at the senior level, the women participants in workshops, seminars, symposia and training courses organized by the Department, and the recruitment of young, female graduates and postgraduates as interns; organizing with the staff development services training for its staff; and creating an outreach programme with other United Nations departments, as well as with

UNDP and UNIFEM, to develop tools and share strategies, specifically in the fields of peace-building, disarmament and development.

59. *ECLAC* 's project entitled "Institutionalization of the gender perspective" is also expected to have great impact in relation to capacity-building in some substantive divisions of the ECLAC. In addition, gender criteria have partly been integrated in the work of ECLAC's Project Management Unit of the Programme Planning and Operation Division through the standard project profile, which requests that all projects take into special consideration the integration of women into development.

60. *ESCAP* continues to accord high priority towards mainstreaming gender dimensions into its regular programme of work. It organized a week-long training workshop for its staff members as part of its mainstreaming activity.

61. In order to facilitate equal contribution of men and women in the work of the Secretariat, the *International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)* has broadened recruitment sources to include professional women's organizations. In addition, career workshops have been initiated in member States to disseminate information on the benefits of nuclear sciences and the career potential of this field of study to students at pre-university and undergraduate levels. This strategy is aimed at increasing the number of women in science and technology. Implementation of this strategy is jointly shared by IAEA and the recipient Member State in terms of financing. No additional human or financial resources have been provided by IAEA — resources are taken from the contributing programme areas.

62. *ICAO* has continued to support and monitor efforts made towards improving the status and representation of women by individual United Nations system organizations, as well as at the global level, in line with the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the subject. ICAO presented a working paper at the thirty-second session of the ICAO Assembly, which was held from 22 September to 8 October 1998, on the recruitment and status of women in ICAO during the period 1995–1997. The Assembly noted that the main source for the recruitment of staff in Professional posts were the national civil aviation administrations. Efforts, made to increase the representation of women at the national level, would therefore eventually help ICAO to improve the recruitment and status of women in the Secretariat. The ICAO Assembly also noted that the ICAO Council would continue to monitor steps taken in the implementation of the targets and action plan on women which had been endorsed during the thirty-first session of the ICAO Assembly.

63. The Director General of the *ILO*, in his report to the International Labour Conference in 1999, entitled "Decent work", emphasized the need for a far greater representation of women in the tripartite decision-making structures of the organization. The plan also covers capacity-building for ILO staff at all levels in the four sectors, and promotes activities leading towards a gender balance in ILO staff composition and the provision of career prospects for women. This plan also represents a shift of the main responsibility in gender mainstreaming to senior management, while stressing that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all staff at all levels in all areas.

64. The Finance Committee of *FAO* underlined the importance of gender, and therefore recommended that the Women and Population Division be protected from any budgetary restrictions for the biennium 2000–2001. FAO's Personnel Division has formulated several strategies to improve gender representation in the organization to support the higher management commitment to the issue. The Committee on Women in Development monitors overall progress in implementing the FAO plan of action on women in development at headquarters and in the field, periodically reviewing and assessing its overall results and impacts. The Committee is supported by a network of gender focal points within each technical division and chaired by the Women and Population Division.

65. In-service training at *ITU* was organized in 1999 for the development sector to assist the staff in integrating a gender perspective into work plans, projects and programmes. A group on gender issues comprising representatives from all areas of ITU has been established to support the work of the focal point on gender issues and to actively support efforts of mainstreaming the gender perspective in all ITU activities.

66. As part of its efforts to mainstream gender in humanitarian activities and policies, orientation sessions on gender issues for *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Activities* staff have been scheduled. In addition, a Gender Adviser has been deployed to the region with a role, *inter alia*, to advise United Nations agencies on how to actively incorporate gender in humanitarian assistance programmes. In November 1998, the Office established focal points for gender issues both in its offices in New York and at Geneva.

67. As part of the reform of human resources management within the Secretariat, the *Office of Human Resources Management* has undertaken a proactive process of holding

department-by-department meetings with all heads of programmes and offices. The meetings are intended to forecast vacancies and to identify future recruitment goals in terms of both geography and gender. The meetings are also intended to actively discuss and review career development goals of staff with department managers. The group has prioritized the numerous issues to be developed over the upcoming months and the high focus items include spouse employment; domestic partnerships; and flexi-time. Each of these issues is particularly important for female staff members either in terms of their work/family responsibilities or in terms of their partners. The Office also spearheaded the recent change in the Organization's policies regarding the payment of family support by staff members. Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1999/4, entitled "Family and child support obligations of staff members", has been issued and is being implemented. It allows for payroll deductions from those staff who fail to meet court-ordered family support obligations.

68. Over the past year, the Office has introduced several specialized recruitment initiatives (e.g., for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and the replacement of gratis personnel), and has taken specific actions to identify as many female candidates as possible for these activities. The Office has now instituted a series of career support programmes for all staff which, however, is particularly targeted at female staff members, with the intention of exposing them to career opportunities in the different departments of the Secretariat.

69. The Habitat Acting Executive Director was requested to develop a gender action plan to implement General Assembly resolution 53/119 by the year 2000, including the goal of achieving a 50/50 gender distribution in staffing, and to make full use of the revitalization process to implement this gender action plan in all categories of posts.

70. *UNFPA* has recently strengthened its country support teams by increasing the number of gender, population and development specialists, and strengthening the partnership with UNIFEM. Twenty full-time professionals employed in country support teams now assist programme countries in integrating gender concerns, teaming up with 150 advisers around the world.

71. At the operational level, the strategic plan for UNU, which is being finalized for UNU Council approval in December 1999, incorporates the objective of increasing women's participation in senior positions. Applications from women candidates are encouraged through vacancy announcements of established posts. To monitor and articulate the effort to attain gender equality, UNU compiles and issues statistics of women staffs and women participants, starting with the 1998 annual report.

72. The *WFP* mid-term review of its Beijing commitments for women made a series of recommendations which have been supported by the gender task force and the WFP Executive Board. The Board's endorsement includes recommendations that expenditures incurred in mainstreaming gender become part of the core budget, that WFP focus more on the strategic needs of women and that WFP strengthen its collaboration with other agencies to share lessons learned. WFP has recently strengthened its Gender Unit at its headquarters, so that it now has two full-time Gender Advisers at the P-5 level and one half-time Junior Professional Officer. In addition, a Regional Gender Adviser has just been hired for the Horn of Africa. The institutional structure for meeting the commitments to women is a gender task force, comprising of senior managers, chaired by the Deputy Executive Director. In addition, each office, in headquarters and in the field, has a gender focal point. This budget structure has just been revised so that country office budgets now reflect gender component.

73. Significant efforts are being made by *WIPO* to promote and increase the proportion of women employed in the organization, especially in the professional and higher categories. In 1998, this proportion reached 30.8 per cent, and now there are six women directors at the D-1 level at WIPO.

74. The possibility of organizing in-house gender-sensitivity workshops is currently under consideration. The objective of such workshops would be to encourage staff members, at all levels and of both genders, to be more sensitive and responsive to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of gender equality.

VI. Conclusions

75. During the period under review, the United Nations system continued to implement the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Increased attention was given to mainstreaming gender and to issues of gender and human resource development, including staff training and recruitment of women. Preparations for the special session, to be held in June 2000 were initiated by a number of United Nations entities as well as by NGOs.